



Australian Bureau of Statistics

6321.0.55.001 - Industrial Disputes, Australia, Mar 2005

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 09/06/2005

Summary

Main Features

MARCH QUARTER 2005 KEY POINTS

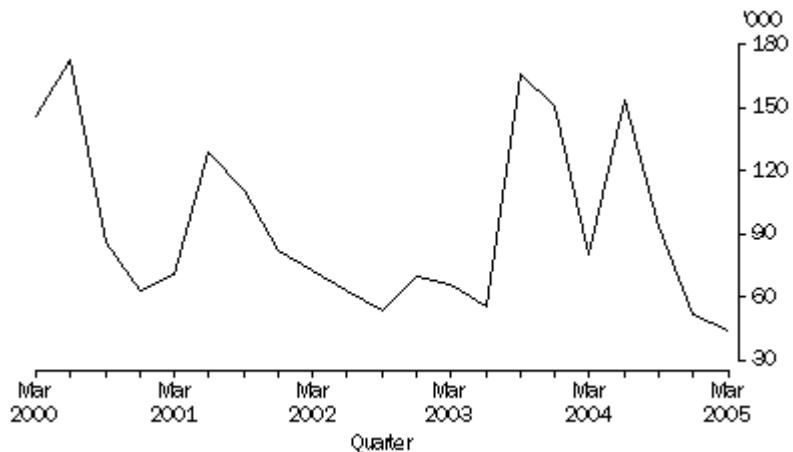
QUARTERLY ESTIMATES

- For the March quarter 2005, there were 116 disputes, 33 less than in the December quarter 2004.
- The number of employees involved in industrial disputes in the March quarter 2005 was 20,000, a decrease from 33,600 in the December quarter 2004.
- There were 44,400 working days lost due to industrial disputation in the March quarter 2005, a decrease from 51,900 in the December quarter 2004.
- The Construction industry accounted for 25,600 (58%) of the total number of working days lost in the March quarter 2005. The Coal mining industry had the highest number of working days lost per thousand employees (367.2) for the quarter.
- In the March quarter 2005, Western Australia accounted for 21,300 (48%) of working days lost. Western Australia also had the highest number of working days lost per thousand employees (24.4) for the quarter.

YEAR ENDED ESTIMATES

- During the year ended March 2005, there were 625 disputes, 45 less than in the year ended March 2004.
- During the year ended March 2005, there were 343,700 working days lost compared with 453,500 in the year ended March 2004.

Working days lost



MARCH QUARTER 2005 KEY FIGURES

	Quarter		Year ended	
	December Quarter 2004	March Quarter 2005	March 2004	March 2005
Number of disputes				
Commenced in period (no.)	r142	106	658	611
Total (no.)	r149	116	670	625
Employees involved				
Newly involved ('000)	29.6	19.6	290.1	168.2
Total ('000)	33.6	20.0	293.6	170.0
Working days lost ('000)	51.9	44.4	453.5	343.7

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TABLES

1. Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

	Number of disputes		Employees involved			
	Commenced in period	Total no.	Newly involved '000	Total '000	Working days lost '000	
March Quarter 2003	153	162	29.2	30.1	66.3	
June Quarter 2003	129	141	26.2	29.7	55.5	
September Quarter 2003	180	193	104.4	107.9	166.2	
December Quarter 2003	172	187	114.9	116.3	151.5	
March Quarter 2004	177	187	44.6	45.2	80.4	
June Quarter 2004	175	190	63.2	65.0	154.2	
September Quarter 2004	188	194	56.0	56.2	93.3	
December Quarter 2004	r142	r149	29.6	33.6	51.9	
March Quarter 2005	106	116	19.6	20.0	44.4	

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2. Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, Industry

December Quarter 2004	March Quarter 2005
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	Working days lost '000	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost '000	Working days lost per thousand employees
Mining				
Coal mining	0.2	11.0	8.7	367.2
Other	2.7	33.7	1.5	17.1
Manufacturing				
Metal product; Machinery and equipment	4.5	13.2	2.4	7.1
Other	8.9	13.5	2.0	2.9
Construction	29.9	52.8	25.6	43.4
Transport and storage; Communication services	2.7	4.8	1.0	1.8
Education; Health and community services	1.9	1.2	2.3	1.5
Other industries	1.1	0.2	0.9	0.2
All industries	51.9	6.1	44.4	5.2

3. Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, States and territories

	December Quarter 2004		March Quarter 2005	
	Working days lost '000	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost '000	Working days lost per thousand employees
New South Wales	10.9	3.9	3.8	1.4
Victoria	18.8	8.7	7.0	3.2
Queensland	4.2	2.5	10.7	6.4
South Australia	0.7	1.1	1.3	2.1
Western Australia	17.1	20.1	21.3	24.4
Tasmania	0.1	0.4	0.3	1.4
Northern Territory	0.2	1.9	-	0.5
Australian Capital Territory	-	0.2	-	-
Australia	51.9	6.1	44.4	5.2

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

4. Industrial disputes which ended during the quarter(a)

	September Quarter 2004			December Quarter 2004		
	Number of disputes no.	Employees involved '000	Working days lost '000	Number of disputes no.	Employees involved '000	Working days lost '000
CAUSE OF DISPUTE						
Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related						
Remuneration	26	7.1	19.5	15	4.9	16.0
Employment conditions (EB)	5	11.1	12.0	4	0.3	0.4
Other EB related	11	5.0	7.9	5	1.3	1.2
Non-EB related						
Remuneration	13	2.1	3.6	10	1.6	5.1
Employment conditions	6	0.7	1.2	5	0.6	0.5
Health and safety	76	16.3	16.8	44	7.9	10.9
Job security	5	6.8	23.7	7	0.5	0.2

Managerial policy	26	2.6	2.8	27	3.8	3.1
Union issues	14	3.3	4.8	18	8.5	6.9
Other non-EB related	5	5.3	3.3	4	0.2	0.2
Total	187	60.3	95.5	139	29.7	44.5

WORKING DAYS LOST PER EMPLOYEE INVOLVED

Up to and including 1 day	104	39.7	26.7	90	19.4	11.3
Over 1 day and up to and including 2 days	39	8.9	12.8	26	5.5	8.2
Over 2 and less than 5 days	33	10.4	36.6	14	2.9	9.6
5 and less than 10 days	7	1.1	7.3	5	1.2	6.2
10 days and over	4	0.3	12.1	4	0.7	9.3
Total	187	60.3	95.5	139	29.7	44.5

REASON WORK RESUMED

Negotiation without intervention of a third party	42	7.1	11.8	15	4.1	12.7
State legislation	16	1.8	1.9	12	0.9	1.5
Federal legislation	26	8.7	36.2	20	2.1	4.5
Pre-determined return to work	25	29.0	24.2	18	4.0	3.7
Resumption without negotiation	66	12.2	13.1	60	16.1	12.1
Mediation	np	1.0	2.0	14	2.6	10.1
Other reasons	np	0.4	6.3	-	-	-
Total	187	60.3	95.5	139	29.7	44.5

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(a) See Explanatory Notes, paragraph 12

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

This publication presents quarterly statistics on industrial disputes in Australia, obtained from the Industrial Disputes collection.

REVISIONS

Revisions have been made to the quarterly series as a result of disputes being identified after the release of the previous issue and as a result of correcting errors in previously reported data.

INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Gordon Wragg on Perth (08) 9360 5159. As well as the statistics included in this publication, other data from the Industrial Disputes collection are available either as time series spreadsheets (see links below) or, on request, as customised reports. If you wish to discuss individual requests please telephone Gordon Wragg.

About this Release

ABOUT THIS RELEASE

Replaces: 6321.0

Number of disputes, employees involved, working days lost and working days lost per 1,000 employees in industrial disputes involving stoppages of work of 10 working days or more, classified by state, industry, cause of dispute, working days lost per employee involved and reason work resumed.

The March 2004 issue was the first quarterly release of this publication. It replaced 6321.0.

Explanatory Notes

Explanatory Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Statistics on the number of industrial disputes, working days lost and employees involved in industrial disputes are obtained from the Industrial Disputes (ID) collection. From March quarter 2004 onwards, ID statistics are being compiled on a quarterly basis. Until December 2003, ID statistics were compiled on a monthly basis.

CONCEPTS, SOURCES AND METHODS

2 Statistics on industrial disputes are based on concepts and definitions outlined in international guidelines adopted by the 1993 International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Descriptions of the underlying concepts of Australia's industrial disputes statistics, and the sources and methods used in compiling these estimates, are presented in **Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods** (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001), which is available on the ABS web site.

SCOPE

3 Industrial disputes are included within the scope of the ID collection if the work stoppages amount to ten or more working days lost. Ten working days lost is equivalent to the amount of ordinary time which would have been worked, for example, during a stoppage of work by ten employees for one day, or, by 40 workers attending a 2 hour stop work meeting (assuming they worked an 8 hour day). Disputes which involve the equivalent of less than 10 working days lost are excluded.

4 The following types of industrial disputes are within the scope of the ID collection:

- unauthorised stopwork meetings
- general strikes
- sympathetic strikes (e.g. strikes in support of a group of workers already on strike)
- political or protest strikes
- rotating or revolving strikes (i.e. strikes which occur when workers at different locations take turns to stop work)
- unofficial strikes
- work stoppages initiated by employers (e.g. lockouts).

5 Excluded from the scope of the collection are work-to-rules, go-slows and bans (e.g. overtime bans). Also excluded are effects of disputes on locations other than where the stoppages occurred, such as stand-downs because of lack of materials, disruption of transport services and power cuts.

6 In addition, if all of the employees involved in an industrial dispute resign, that dispute is deemed to be resolved and it is excluded from the scope of the collection from the date of the employment termination.

COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

7 A list of organisations whose employees were involved in industrial disputes is compiled monthly. Disputes are identified through a range of sources, including media reports, listings obtained from industrial relations commissions, and contact with government organisations, businesses, employer associations and trade unions. Although every attempt is made to identify all disputes that occurred in the month, some small disputes may not be identified through the sources available.

8 Once all disputes for a month are identified, additional information on the nature and extent of each dispute is obtained through a mail-out/mail-back collection, usually to employers, on the nature and extent of the dispute. Some data, e.g. working days lost in a particular strike, may be imputed. Due to the imputation procedures and the limitations on identification of disputes, the statistics should not be regarded as an exact measure of the extent of industrial disputation.

9 A dispute affecting several locations is counted as a single dispute if it is organised or directed by the same organisation (e.g. a trade union) or person; otherwise it is counted as a separate dispute at each location where it occurred.

10 A dispute affecting more than one state and/or industry is counted in each state and/or industry in which it occurred, but only once for Australia in total and for the total of all industries.

11 When there is a return to work between stoppages over the same issue, and the return to work is for less than two complete months, the stoppages are counted as a single dispute. When the return to work is for two or more months, the dispute is considered to have ended at the time of the return to work. Should a subsequent stoppage occur, it is counted as a

new dispute.

12 Due to the 'two month rule' explained above, data relating to disputes which ended in the quarter can not be finalised until two months have elapsed without further industrial action. Consequently the publication of data for disputes which ended during the quarter has been lagged by one quarter.

CLASSIFICATIONS

13 Each employer included in the ID collection is classified according to the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 1993** (cat. no. 1292.0) available from the ABS web site.

14 New classifications for 'Cause of dispute' and 'Reason work resumed' (formerly 'Method of settlement') were introduced in the March quarter 2004. Statistics based on the new classifications are available from March quarter 2003 onwards. In addition, the 'Duration of dispute' classification has been renamed 'Working days lost per employee involved' from the March quarter 2004.

RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

15 Estimates from the ID collection are subject to non-sampling error. Non-sampling error arises from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. Every effort is made to minimise non-sampling error by the careful design of questionnaires and by efficient data collection and processing procedures.

DATA COMPARABILITY OVER TIME

16 In addition to the changes described above for the March quarter 2004, there have been a number of previous methodological changes to the ID collection which have affected data comparability over time. These changes are discussed in Chapter 24 of **Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods** (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

17 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available from the ABS web site and ABS Bookshops:

- **Australian Labour Market Statistics** (cat. no. 6105.0) - issued quarterly
- **Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia** (cat. no. 6310.0) - issued annually
- **Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia** (cat. no. 6306.0) - issued biennially
- **Labour Force, Australia** (cat. no. 6202.0) - issued monthly
- **Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods** (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

18 Current publications and other products released by the ABS are listed in the **Catalogue of Publications and Products** (cat. no. 1101.0). The Catalogue is available from any ABS office or the ABS web site. The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the web site which details products to be released in the week ahead.

ROUNDING

19 Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

SUPPRESSION OF DATA

20 Some data may be suppressed to prevent disclosure, either directly or by inference, of information relating to individual organisations. These data have been replaced by the symbol 'np', but are included in totals.

Glossary

Cause of Dispute

Cause of dispute statistics relate to the reported main cause of stoppage of work and not necessarily all causes that may have been responsible for the stoppage of work. For these reasons, the statistics do not reflect the relative importance of all causes of disputes as perceived by both employers and employees. The causes are classified from information supplied by employers and according to standards determined by the International Labour Organisation.

Disputes are initially classified according to whether a dispute occurred during a process of workplace/enterprise bargaining. A process of workplace/enterprise bargaining refers to the negotiations that take place between an employer and their employees (or their representatives), in reaching an agreement over pay and employment conditions.

Disputes not related to a process of workplace/enterprise bargaining include:

- disputes relating to award negotiations
- disputes relating to the content or application of an existing agreement (and do not seek to amend or terminate the agreement)

Disputes are then further classified according to the main cause of the dispute, as follows:

Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related:

Remuneration: Disputes relating to wages and other forms of remuneration, e.g. increase/decrease in wages, allowances, entitlements and superannuation.

Employment conditions: Disputes relating to hours of work, leave, non-remuneration related benefits, and other general employment conditions, e.g. increase/decrease in hours, distribution of hours and holiday and leave provisions.

Other EB related: Causes other than Remuneration or Employment conditions, including job security and other causes relating to a process of workplace/enterprise bargaining, e.g. pattern bargaining strikes, disputes where employees refuse to enter into enterprise bargaining negotiations.

Non-EB related:

Remuneration: as above

Employment conditions: as above

Health and safety: Disputes concerning physical working conditions, safety issues and workers' compensation provisions, e.g. accidents, protective clothing and equipment, first aid services, uncomfortable working conditions, employee amenities, shortage or poor distribution of equipment or material, condition of equipment, and arduous physical tasks.

Job security: Disputes concerning issues relating to job security, e.g. retrenchment of employees, downsizing, restructuring, use of contractors, outsourcing, re-classification of the workforce, and market conditions within the relevant industry.

Managerial policy: Disputes relating to the decisions and policies of line managers, e.g. disciplinary matters, suspensions, personal disagreement, discrimination, decisions that impact upon work and family issues, docking of pay, fines, production limits or quotas, principles of promotion or filling positions, and work practices.

Union issues: Disputes concerning the alleged anti-union attitude of the employer, inter-union and intra-union disputes (e.g. demarcation disputes), sympathy stoppages in support of employees in another industry, and recognition of union activities.

Other non-EB related: Disputes that cannot be ascribed to any other category, e.g. political protests.

Disputes

An industrial dispute is defined as a state of disagreement over an issue or group of issues between an employer and its employees, which results in employees ceasing work. Industrial disputes comprise strikes, which are a withdrawal from work by a group of

employees; and lockouts, which are a refusal by an employer or group of employers to permit some or all of their employees to work.

Disputes which ended during the reference period

Disputes which ended during the period encompasses those disputes which:

- started in a previous period and ended in the reference period
- began and ended in the reference period.

Disputes which occurred during the reference period

Disputes which occurred during the period encompasses those disputes which:

- started in a previous period and ended in the reference period
- began and ended in the reference period
- began in the reference period and continued into the next period
- started prior to the reference period and continued past the reference period.

Employees

Employees refers to wage and salary earners only. Excluded are persons who are self-employed (e.g. building sub-contractors, owner-drivers of trucks) and employers.

Employees directly involved: Employees who actually participated in the dispute in order to enforce or resist a demand or to express a grievance.

Employees indirectly involved: Employees who were stood down at the location where the stoppage occurred, but who were not themselves parties to the dispute. Employees who were stood down at locations other than those where the disputes occurred are excluded.

Employees newly involved: For a new dispute, comprises all employees who are involved and, for an ongoing dispute, those involved for the first time.

Total employees involved: Comprises employees newly involved and, for an ongoing dispute, those who continue to be involved. Total employees involved for any period of time is obtained by adding together the number of employees involved in each dispute for the period.

Industry

Industry is classified according to the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 1993** (cat. no. 1292.0).

Other industries comprises those industries not included in the specified industry groupings, i.e. Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Electricity, gas and water supply; Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Accommodation, cafes and restaurants; Finance and insurance; Property and business services; Government administration and defence; Cultural and recreational services and Personal and other services.

Reason Work Resumed

Reason work resumed statistics relate to the reason for ending the stoppage of work as reported and not necessarily to the reason(s) for settling all matters in dispute. Therefore, they do not reflect the relative importance of the work of various industrial tribunals operating under state and federal legislation. The classification of Reason work resumed is as follows:

Negotiation without intervention of a third party: Negotiation between the parties involved, or their representatives, without the intervention or assistance of authorities constituted under state or federal industrial legislation, and without mediation.

State legislation: Intervention or assistance of an industrial authority or authorities created by, or constituted under, state industrial/workplace relations legislation. Disputes that are referred to a mediator by a state industrial tribunal, either on a voluntary or compulsory basis, are included under 'Mediation' (except in instances where mediation is directed and a return to work ordered).

Federal legislation: Intervention or assistance of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC). Disputes that are referred to a mediator by the AIRC, either on a voluntary or compulsory basis, are included under 'Mediation' (except in instances where mediation is directed and a return to work ordered).

Pre-determined return to work: Disputes for which a return to work is determined prior to the industrial action, e.g. when employees decide to go out on strike for a pre-determined period of 24 hours.

Resumption without negotiation: Disputes in which employees decide to return to work without the dispute being resolved, and without any negotiations having taken place to prompt the return, e.g. stop-work meetings, and disputes where employees decide to return to work to avoid further loss of earnings or for other reasons. This category may include some disputes which are settled subject to subsequent negotiation, such as industrial court hearings.

Mediation: Disputes that are settled through the assistance of a mediator, either voluntarily or as directed by a state or federal industrial tribunal, e.g. AIRC.

Other reasons: Disputes that cannot be ascribed to any other category, e.g. replacing employees on strike or locked out, permanent closure of business, and dismissal or resignation of employees.

Working days lost

Working days lost refers to working days lost by employees directly and indirectly involved in the dispute.

Working days lost per employee involved (formerly 'Duration of dispute')

The average number of working days lost per employee involved in the dispute, calculated by dividing the number of working days lost in the dispute by the number of employees involved (both directly and indirectly).

Working days lost per thousand employees

Working days lost per thousand employees are calculated for a quarterly period by dividing the total number of working days lost in the period by the total number of employees in the Australian labour force in the period (obtained from the ABS Labour Force Survey) and multiplying by 1,000. Labour Force Survey employee estimates are revised every 5 years as a result of the implementation of new population benchmarks from the Census of Population and Housing. As a result, estimates of working days lost per thousand employees are also subject to revision.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in this publication

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

ANZSIC Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification

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